

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1904

April 25, 2007

Mr. Kevin J. Martin
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Martin:

I am writing to express my support for the proposal submitted to the Rural Health Care Pilot Program by the *Rural Western and Central Maine Broadband Initiative*, a collaboration of the Franklin Community Health Network, the HealthReach Community Health Centers, and Central Maine Healthcare. Funding through this program will help the partners provide high-speed Internet communications to the large rural population in central and western Maine. The infrastructure to support the broadband access will be achieved in partnership with Oxford Networks, which has pledged to match 15% of the grant funding.

Maine has the lowest rate in New England for households with Internet access, and the area of western and central Maine is particularly underserved. Health care is an ever-changing and developing field, and the technological tools that are utilized by providers and patients in education, treatment and prevention are increasingly important and reliant upon Internet communications. Extending access to communities that are otherwise technologically isolated opens up a world of information, resources, and services. This information can enable community members to be active participants in their own health care, which can benefit their health and well-being, and can potentially improve the overall quality of life for the region.

I urge your serious consideration of the *Rural Western and Central Maine Broadband Initiative's* grant application. If I can provide you with more information, please contact Sara Holmbom Lund of my Portland office at (207) 780-3575. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Susan M. Collins
United States Senator

SMC:shl

THOMAS H. ALLEN
for District of Maine

1127 LONGWORTH HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-6116

57 EXCHANGE STREET, SUITE 302
PORTLAND, ME 04101
(202) 774-5019

209 MAIN STREET, SUITE 100
SACO, ME 04072
(202) 283-8054

www.tomalien.house.gov



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-1901

COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET
COMMITTEE ON
ENERGY AND COMMERCE

SUBCOMMITTEES:
HEALTH

ENERGY AND AIR QUALITY
ENVIRONMENT AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

HOUSE OCEANS CAUCUS
Co-Chair

AFFORDABLE MEDICINES TASK FORCE
Co-Chair

May 3, 2007

Kevin J. Martin
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445-12th St. SW
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Chairman Martin:

I am pleased to write in support of the application submitted by Franklin Community Health Network, HealthReach Community Health Centers, and Central Maine Healthcare for their "Rural Western and Central Maine Broadband Initiative" proposal.

The initiative would bring critical broadband access and redundancy to a large rural population of Maine, many of whom live in remote areas at great distances from hospitals, specialists and other health care providers. Increasingly, providers and residents in these areas depend upon dependable, secure, two-way communications for transferring clinical data. This project will improve the ability of health care providers to bring quality healthcare services to these residents. Currently, only a single carrier (Verizon) provides the required communication system. When breaks in service have occurred, community health has been compromised. This implementation project would ensure that disruptions in critical communication do not occur.

The enhanced service will also maximize the region's capacity for distance learning programs, allow social service agencies to provide new ways to educate and connect with the community (such as through teleconferencing), allow health care providers to connect with residents and to embrace new technologies, and make the region more attractive to new and developing businesses. In light of these enormous potential benefits, I urge you to consider this proposal favorably.

Sincerely,

Tom Allen
Member of Congress

THA:jc

MICHAEL H. MICHAUD
2nd District, MAINE

WASHINGTON OFFICE
1724 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
Phone: (202) 225-8308
Fax: (202) 225-2943

www.house.gov/michaud

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

April 27, 2007

Kevin J. Martin, Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20554

Re: 'Rural Health Care Pilot Program': WC Docket No. 02-60

Dear Chairman Martin:

I am writing to offer my enthusiastic support for Franklin Community Health Network's (FCHN) proposal in collaboration with Central Maine Healthcare and HealthReach Community Health Centers to establish broadband infrastructure in rural western and central Maine communities.

The development of high speed Internet infrastructure is critical to the development of Maine's rural communities. Sixty percent of Mainers live in the rural regions that encompass much of the state. Serious challenges face rural Maine communities in connecting to high speed Internet, including geographic gaps in service that prevent access for many students, residents, and businesses in the state.

FCHN's initiative will allow health care providers in this region to better serve patients through innovative telemedicine programs and other technologies. High-speed Internet would strengthen all sectors of the region's economy, and provide access to distance learning programs that would allow rural Mainers to seek educational opportunities otherwise unavailable in their communities. FCHN's proposal to establish broadband infrastructure in western and central Maine communities that currently lack this resource would provide a model for rural communities across the nation, demonstrating the impact that investment in broadband infrastructure has on rural communities.

I am confident that this project will bring significant benefit to residents of the western and central Maine communities by not only supporting a higher quality of healthcare, but also enabling a more robust economy, better educational programs, and more opportunities for Mainers to connect with the world outside their communities.

With warmest regards,



Michael H. Michaud
Member of Congress

COMMITTEES:
VETERANS' AFFAIRS
SUBCOMMITTEE ON HEALTH
CHAIRMAN

TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT
SUBCOMMITTEE ON RAILROADS, PIPELINES
AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS
SUBCOMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT,
PUBLIC BUILDINGS AND
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

SMALL BUSINESS
SUBCOMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND TECHNOLOGY
SUBCOMMITTEE ON RURAL AND URBAN
ENTREPRENEURSHIP
SUBCOMMITTEE ON TAX AND FINANCE

BANGOR:
23 WATER STREET
BANGOR, ME 04401
Phone: (207) 942-6935
Fax: (207) 942-5907

LEWISTON:
179 LINCOLN STREET, Ground Floor
LEWISTON, ME 04240
Phone: (207) 782-3704
Fax: (207) 782-5330



PRESQUE ISLE:
445 MAIN STREET
PRESQUE ISLE, ME 04769
Phone: (207) 764-1036
Fax: (207) 764-1060

WATERVILLE:
16 COMMON STREET
WATERVILLE, ME 04501
Phone: (207) 873-5713
Fax: (207) 873-5717



Franklin Community Health Network

April 27, 2007

Kevin J. Martin

Chairman

Federal Communications Commission

445 12th Street, SW

Washington, D.C. 20554

Re: 'Rural Health Care Pilot Program': WC Docket No. 02-60

Dear Mr. Martin:

Our little healthcare system, which serves a highly rural area in the Western Mountains Region of Maine, has achieved great things. Despite the hardships that often face rural healthcare providers, we are viewed as a model for rural healthcare across the country, and have won national awards and acclaim. However, like many other rural healthcare systems, we suffer from the lack of infrastructure available to us. This *Rural Western and Central Maine Broadband Initiative* will provide key infrastructure to our healthcare system and to the communities we serve.

Despite the difficulty rural systems typically have in obtaining the same technology and innovations available to our urban counterparts, Franklin Community Health Network is known for providing our community with comprehensive, cutting edge diagnostic equipment, high-tech procedures, and a state of the art facility. Technology has provided us with innovative opportunities to serve a rural region that is twice the size of the state of Rhode Island through telemedicine programs and digital imaging services. Technology has also helped us to meet the educational needs of staff and community members through distance learning at our Ben Franklin Center, model rural site for the Maine AHEC Network (based out of the University of New England School of Osteopathic Medicine). However, none of these important programs are currently able to operate at capacity due to a lack of broadband Internet access. We are one of a few hospitals in Maine that bears this burden, and our network, connected by a single T1 line, is strained.

Since we propose establishing a non-proprietary broadband infrastructure, the growth of Internet access will also have significant benefit to our community by promoting educational resources and helping local businesses. Importantly, greater Internet access will also support our efforts to connect with our service area. In the same way that our Mobile Health Unit visits the farthest reaches of our service area to provide health screenings and education, Internet-based resources allow us to reach out to community members in their homes, providing them with educational resources and health information. We have already recognized this potential with our innovative Maine Health Forum and Community Connector websites, both of which provide individuals with important health information and resources; however, these projects cannot reach their full potential without robust broadband access in our service area.

Of particular note is the fact that **ours is an implementation proposal**. By the end of the funding period, our network will be on the ground. There will be immediate and tangible benefits for our health system and our community by the end of year one. I mention this simply because this is something that makes our proposal unique, and part of what makes our vision so powerful. Moreover, through this initiative, Franklin Community Health Network will not only promote great benefit in the health care of rural communities of western and central Maine; we will also provide a model for rural communities across the nation by demonstrating the impact that

Kevin J. Martin

Re: 'Rural Health Care Pilot Program': WC Docket No. 02-60

Page 2

investment in rural broadband infrastructure can have. Our Network is truly committed to this project, and we will devote ourselves to ensuring its successful implementation in collaboration with HealthReach Community Health Centers and Central Maine Healthcare.

I urge you to favorably consider Franklin Community Health Network's proposal to establish broadband infrastructure in rural western and central Maine Communities. This project will truly change life in our service area, both in the realm of healthcare and beyond.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Richard Batt", with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Richard Batt
President

cc: Jeremy Marcus
Thomas Buckley
Erika Olsen



Franklin Community Health Network

April 26, 2007

Re: 'Rural Health Care Pilot Program': WC Docket No. 02-60

Kevin J. Martin
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Mr. Martin:

I am writing in support of Franklin Community Health Network's submission to the FCC Rural Health Care Pilot Program. Rural Maine - particularly the western mountains region that includes Oxford and Franklin counties - is in dire need of broadband access. Availability of such infrastructure is key to future economic growth for this area.

Health care costs continue to climb, while the consumer of healthcare services has come to expect more and more from the healthcare field. Advances in technology and the cost of that technology continue to drive costs upwards, and so while technological advances raise expectations with consumers, they also drive costs. In a region such as ours these technological advances also carry a heavy price tag for supporting infrastructure. By investing in needed infrastructure through this grant proposal, the health care facilities represented in this request will be able to hold down expenses and slow the rise in healthcare expense for our region.

As outlined in the submission, 'the perfect demographic storm' is developing for our region with the decline of traditional industry, the aging Baby Boomer population, and the short supply of skilled health professionals. Access to broadband technology will play a vital role in slowing or reversing these trends, and in attracting new industries and population to the region.

As the designated project leader I am personally committed to the value of this initiative, and I am very much vested in the success of this project. It is my sincere hope that the FCC will support our application for this pilot project.

Sincerely,

Ralph Johnson
Chief Information Officer
Franklin Community Health Network.

cc: Jeremy Marcus
Thomas Buckley
Erika Olsen

HealthReach Community Health Centers

Kevin J. Martin
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

May 3, 2007

RE: "RURAL HEALTH CARE PILOT PROGRAM": WC Docket No. 02-60

Dear Mr. Martin:

It is with great excitement that I support this initiative, led by Franklin Community Health Network (FCHN), to bring broadband Internet access to the rural regions of western and central Maine.

HealthReach Community Health Centers is a system of eleven federally qualified health centers, serving rural communities across western and central Maine. Our providers deliver high quality, affordable primary care services to over 36,000 Maine residents and visitors annually, regardless of insurance status or ability to pay. We have long experienced a beneficial collaborative relationship with FCHN which has allowed us to better serve our patients, including a 9-year partnership developing and promoting Franklin Health Access, an innovative program that helps the uninsured receive needed health services. We also actively participate in teleconferenced programs through FCHN's Ben Franklin Center, allowing us to bring important educational programs to our patients and caregivers in rural areas.

However, like FCHN, we struggle with the lack of infrastructure available in the communities we serve. This includes a lack of broadband Internet access, a technology that is key to many innovations in digital imaging, patient-provider communication, and telemedicine that help us to support our patients, as well as distance-learning and teleconferenced educational opportunities that help us to support the needs of our providers.

We are committed to supporting FCHN in this *Rural Western and Central Maine Broadband Initiative* precisely because the benefits it will have to our patients, our providers, and our communities are so great. I am glad to participate in the project's steering committee to ensure its success, and to support the time of Daniel Burgess, who will serve on the project work group on HealthReach's behalf.

I urge you to favorably consider the Franklin Community Health Network's proposal to establish broadband infrastructure in rural western and central Maine communities. I look forward to yet another opportunity to work with FCHN to better serve our communities.

Sincerely,



Connie Coggins
President & CEO
HealthReach Community Health Centers

cc: Jeremy Marcus
Thomas Buckley
Erika Olsen

8 Highwood Street
P.O. Box 1568
Waterville, Maine
04903-1568

Telephone: (207) 861-3400
(207) 626-3430

Fax: (207) 861-5519
TDD: (207) 861-3498

email: hchc@healthreach.org

CC:ay

Belgrade Regional Health Center
Bethel Family Health Center
Bingham Area Health Center

Lovejoy Health Center
Madison Area Health Center
Mt. Abram Reg. Health Center

Rangeley Region Health Center
Richmond Area Health Center
Sheepscot Valley Health Center

Strong Area Health Center
Strong Area Dental Center
Western Maine Family Health Center

www.HealthReachCHC.org



April 9, 2007

Richard Batt
President / Chief Executive Officer
Franklin Community Health Network
111 Franklin Health Commons
Farmington, Maine 04938

Dear Mr. Batt,

Central Maine Healthcare is delighted to collaborate with Franklin Community Health Network and HealthReach Community Health Centers on the FCC broadband access initiative. Our collective desire has always been to bring the highest quality healthcare to the people of rural central and western Maine.

In order to do that, the region needs both expanded broadband access and redundancy. Redundancy assures that there is no service break when a single carrier experiences a system failure. As the region's tertiary provider and Level II trauma center, any break in Central Maine Medical Center's ability to properly communicate with regional providers is potentially disastrous, and absolutely unacceptable. Unfortunately, we have only a single carrier currently servicing Central Maine Healthcare's three hospitals (Central Maine Medical Center, Bridgton Hospital and Rumford Hospital), and system failures have already compromised our ability to transfer clinical information in digital format. Therefore, our proposal is an *implementation proposal*, which will establish both new broadband access and redundancy by the end of the grant period.

We also have a number of practices, as well as rural communities where providers reside, that either have no broadband access, or no redundancy. As new digital services become available (among them: the new PACS system; our electronic medical record; the clinical, referral and patient portals of our innovative Portal Suite Project; and expanded distance learning opportunities offered through our School of Nursing), provider and consumer broadband access off-site and *at home* becomes increasingly critical.

Thus, our project is designed to accomplish three very important things: (1) to bring broadband access and redundancy to provider organizations and practices across the region; (2) to bring broadband lines through communities where providers and consumers reside, which will allow them access to the myriad digital initiatives described in our proposal, and; (3) to be sustainable – which will be accomplished through the regular fee structure of our broadband vendor, Oxford Network.

In short, FCC funding will vastly enhance our collective ability to provide current and innovative new healthcare services to clinicians and consumers, empower both groups, and improve the quality of care across the region.

Sincerely,

Peter E. Chalke
Chief Executive Officer



OXFORD NETWORKS

www.oxfordnetworks.com

May 2, 2007

Re: 'Rural Health Care Pilot Program': WC Docket No. 02-60

To whom it may concern:

Contingent upon Franklin Community Health Network's receipt of a Rural Health Care Pilot Program grant, Oxford Networks agrees to work as technology partner with Franklin Community Health Network and its collaborators, HealthReach Community Health Centers and Central Maine Healthcare on this initiative, and to make any in-kind contributions, including personnel and travel expenses that are required to support project implementation. Oxford's involvement will consist of building the fiber optic backbone connecting identified healthcare providers and communities. This support will be continued if the initiative receives a second year of funding. Oxford also agrees to leave our books open to audit for four years in order to assure all parties that our expenses associated with this initiative are at cost. We further agree to provide a \$296,356 cash match (15% of the cost of establishing fiber backbone in the identified network) for the \$1,862,860 in Rural Health Care Pilot grant monies requested.

Oxford will continue to support FCHN's broadband connectivity into the future by subsidizing FCHN's subscription costs as part of our continuing partnership. This will be achieved by providing a 20% discount on service and a 50% discount on one-time installation costs on their 10 MB Internet connection.

Sincerely,

Craig Gunderson
President & CEO



HealthInfoNet

OFFICERS

Chairperson
Charles Hewett, Ph.D.
Chief Operating Officer
Jackson Laboratory, Bar Harbor

Vice-Chairperson
David Howes, M.D.
President & Chief Medical Officer
Martin's Point Health Care, Portland

Treasurer
Daniel Coffey, Executive Vice President
Eastern Maine Healthcare Systems, Bangor

Secretary
Nona Boyink, President
HealthReach Network & MaineGeneral
Rehab & Nursing Care, Winslowville

MEMBERS

Arthur Blank, President
Mt. Desert Island Hospital, Bar Harbor

Boyd Baser, D.O., Interim Dean
UNE College of Osteopathic Medicine,
Biddeford

Carol Canthers, Executive Director
National Alliance for the Mentally Ill,
Augusta

Brenda Harvey, Commissioner
Maine Dept. of Health & Human Services,
Augusta

Larry Hopenstead, M.D.
Chief Medical Officer
Central Maine Medical Center, Lewiston

Betsy Mahoney, Esq.
Legal & Public Policy Consultant,
Cumberland

Richard Marston
Manager of Human Resources
Fraser Papers Inc., Madawaska

Edward Miller, Chief Executive Officer
American Lung Assoc. of Maine, Augusta

Dona Mills, M.D., Director
Maine Center for Disease Control, Augusta

Red Prior, M.D., Medical Director for
Information Systems
Franklin Memorial Hospital, Farmington

Trish Riley, Director
Governor's Office of Health Policy &
Finance, Augusta

Stephen Rosenfeld, M.D.,
Chief Information Officer
MaineHealth, Portland

Karl Turner, Senator
Self Employed Businessman, Cumberland

Richard White, Market Service Leader
Cigna Healthcare of Maine, Falmouth

John Witherspoon, Chief Executive Officer
Finance Authority of Maine, Augusta

Re: 'Rural Health Care Pilot Program': WC Docket No. 02-60

Kevin J. Martin
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Mr. Martin:

I write to support Franklin Community Health Network's application to the FCC in collaboration with HealthReach Community Health Centers and Central Maine Healthcare. Their initiative to establish broadband infrastructure in rural western and central Maine communities will provide great benefit to Maine's developing Regional Health Information Organization (RHIO), HealthInfoNet.

Maine HealthInfoNet is an ambitious statewide electronic patient information system, which will gather information from doctor's offices, hospitals, clinical laboratories, and other care sites into a comprehensive database. Currently in first stage implementation, we plan to expand to a statewide level by 2010.

Once fully implemented, providers at virtually every hospital, practice and lab in the state will be able to access vital patient information via the network, and will be able to do so in a timely and convenient manner. Since this comprehensive record will include information about a patient from all locations where they have received health services, providers will no longer have to locate paper records at multiple care sites to learn the details of a patient's medical history, and patients will no longer bear the burden of sharing their history with providers. This will greatly improve providers' ability to make informed decisions about patient care, while reducing test duplications, unnecessary hospital admissions, and treatment caused errors.

However, the network's success with physicians in rural areas will depend on their being able to obtain broadband access to the Internet, which in much of western and central Maine is extremely limited. Lack of access at rural clinics, provider offices, and in provider homes will prevent robust participation in the network.

As a largely rural state, the participation of providers in Maine's rural areas is key to our goal of statewide implementation, and necessary to support the creation of a comprehensive record across all networks and healthcare systems. Without easy access to the network, providers and patients in rural areas, who already face many unique challenges providing and obtaining care, will face yet another disadvantage.

Franklin Community Health Network's initiative to increase broadband in several key rural regions will help ensure the success of our work by enabling a robust use of the system by providers (and consumers) in rural areas. This in turn will help us reach our overall goals to improve the quality of health care, enhance patient safety, moderate the growth of costs and make healthcare information available for all Mainers.

I urge you to fund Franklin Community Health Network's proposal in collaboration with HealthReach Community Health Centers and Central Maine Healthcare.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Devore Culver", written over a horizontal line.

Devore Culver
Executive Director
HealthInfoNet

cc: Jeremy Marcus
Thomas Buckley
Erika Olsen



May 1, 2007

Re: 'Rural Health Care Pilot Program': WC Docket No. 02-60

Kevin J. Martin
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Mr. Martin:

I am writing to express my enthusiastic support for Franklin Community Health Network's Rural Western and Central Maine Broadband Initiative in collaboration with HealthReach Community Health Centers and Central Maine Healthcare.

The Maine Area Health Education Center (AHEC) Network, based in the Division of Community Programs at University of New England College of Osteopathic Medicine, works closely with and depends on the rural health expertise of the Franklin Community Health Network AHEC and its affiliate, Franklin Memorial Hospital. One of Maine's four AHEC sites, FCHN's particular leadership role in AHEC is to develop and implement rural models for education of current and potential health professionals. As part of this, FCHN makes use of its high level of technological capacity to offer distance learning at its Ben Franklin Center, including partnering with Central Maine Medical Center's School of Nursing to offer a nursing degree. Thus, enhancing the capacity of FCHN to offer rural education via broadband has implications not only for the residents of Western Maine, but for the State of Maine in partnership with our Maine AHEC Network.

We urge you to favorably consider Franklin Community Health Network's proposal to establish broadband infrastructure in rural western and central Maine Communities, and look forward to supporting use of this much-needed infrastructure throughout the State of Maine.

Sincerely,

Holly Korda, MA, PhD
Director, Maine AHEC Network
Associate Dean for Community Programs
University of New England College of Osteopathic Medicine



UNIVERSITY OF MAINE AT FARMINGTON

MAINE'S FIRST CHOICE IN PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

MERRILL HALL
224 MAIN STREET
FARMINGTON, MAINE 04938
TEL 207-778-7256
FAX 207-778-8189
TDD 207-778-7000
WWW.UMF.MAINE.EDU
KALIKOW@MAINE.EDU

April 18, 2007

Re: 'Rural Health Care Pilot Program': WC Docket No. 02-60

Kevin J. Martin
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Mr. Martin:

The University of Maine at Farmington (UMF) has benefited in many ways from our close collaborative relationship with Franklin Community Health Network (FCHN) over the years. This initiative, a proposal led by FCHN in collaboration with area HealthReach Community Health Centers and Central Maine Healthcare, is yet another example.

Our region of Western Maine lacks comprehensive access to high-speed broadband Internet connectivity. While UMF's campus is connected through integrated wireless technology, many of our faculty members and students in off-campus housing are without broadband connections in their homes. This means that these individuals have trouble connecting with online components of class curricula or connecting with UMF faculty and staff outside the classroom.

At UMF, we pride ourselves on the real-world experiences available to students via service learning programs and internships. Many area organizations and non-profits where our students do internships similarly lack access to the resources and tools available via high-speed broadband. Students enrolled in our Community Health program – the most comprehensive community health program in the state – enjoy access to work opportunities at FCHN, nationally acclaimed for its innovative community health programming, and yet FCHN's Franklin Memorial Hospital is one of few in the state that lack broadband access. High-speed broadband connections at all sites where our students learn will ensure that the learning process is supported with access to online tools and resources, and connected with their experiences in the classroom.

Regional broadband access will also substantially strengthen our relationship with FCHN, beyond supporting internship opportunities for our students at the organization. FCHN is co-founder and sponsor of our Maine Health Research Institute, a research entity that provides healthcare consulting services to the Maine Department of Health and Human Services and other healthcare organizations. Broadband connections between FCHN and our campus will support these valuable connections, and facilitate greater collaboration.

I urge you to consider Franklin Community Health Network's proposal favorably.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Theodora J. Kalikow', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Theodora J. Kalikow
President

cc: Jeremy Marcus
 Thomas Buckley
 Erika Olsen



UNIVERSITY OF MAINE AT
FARMINGTON

MAINE'S FIRST CHOICE IN PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION

UNIVERSITY OF MAINE AT FARMINGTON
111 SOUTH STREET
FARMINGTON, MAINE 04938
207-778-7000
WWW.UMF.MAINE.EDU

02 May 2007

Ralph Johnson
Chief Information Officer
Franklin Community Health Network
Franklin Memorial Hospital
111 Franklin Health Commons
Farmington, Maine 04938

Dear Mr. Johnson,

The University of Maine at Farmington would like to offer our encouragement and support to your consortium's application for an FCC Rural Healthcare Grant.

Although the direct benefit to the University would not likely be significant, we see substantial opportunities for the regional medical community and for the citizens of Western Maine should your proposal receive funding.

Access to consulting specialists in distant cities, travel avoidance for medical staff, and the ability to keep patients close to family while receiving top notch and highly-specialized services would clearly improve the quality of health care in the region.

The project would provide the broad band "glue" to make operations in clinics and doctors' offices more efficient by tying them into hospital data systems. The enhanced availability of broadband to the residence which would be made possible by the grant, would go a long ways toward improving in-patient care by permitting physicians to conveniently review status in the evenings or during the weekends without the lost time to travel or excessive loss of family time. (Hopefully, action by the FCC in the matter of Docket 06-150 will enable high speed "last mile" wireless service in the 700 MHz region. For this rural area, the redeployment of the UHF spectrum would answer the problems of expensive land lines in a sparse market, trees and structures which play havoc with 2.4/5.8 GHz traffic, and the ERP limits of the current generation of wireless solutions.)

Having a big pipe to major, research, and teaching hospitals would permit the development of relationships and protocols which would bring the skills of top notch doctors to bear on difficult cases where the experience of specialized, high volume practitioners can make a significant difference in outcomes. It could offer the next best thing to being in Boston when, for a variety of reasons, that wasn't going to happen.

For the University, the benefits we might expect to derive from the grant would be getting our Student Health Center online to Franklin Memorial Hospital and opening up opportunities for collaborative projects between the hospital, your partners, and our Maine Health Research Institute.

The creation of basic high speed data infrastructure via the grant, has the potential of enabling a variety of other endeavors in the region. State economic development initiatives are focusing on this geographical area as a possible site for the creation of IT and medical IT "clusters". Both, obviously, will require the kind of data services which could be jump-started by success in this grant opportunity.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mal Carey", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Mal Carey
Director, Computer Center